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SUBJECT: GULEN MOVEMENT AFFILIATES PLAN TURKISH-ARMENIAN  
FESTIVAL IN LOS ANGELES

¶1. Summary. Gulen-affiliated organizations are planning a multi-cultural event April 2-5, 2009, in Costa Mesa, California, titled "Anatolian Cultures & Food Festival/ Discovering Turkey." The festival will inform the local community about Anatolian Culture and the contributions to it of (among others) the Greek, Armenian, and Turkish communities. The organizers claim to have the support of the Turkish President and Minister of Culture, and intend to seek the support of the Armenian government. End summary.

¶2. On September 9, we met with The Pacifica Institute, based in Los Angeles, California, represented by Vice President Ibrahim Barlas; its sister organization the Bosphorus-Atlantic Association of Cultural Cooperation and Friendship (BAKIAD), based in Istanbul, Turkey, represented by Secretary General Kubilay Dikyurt; and Gurkan Vural, a media consultant. They are planning an event titled "Anatolian Cultures & Food Festival/ Discovering Turkey." The festival will inform the Southern California community about Anatolian Culture and the contributions to it of (among others) the Greek, Armenian, and Turkish communities. (Barlas estimated that some 30,000 people of Turkish descent reside in Southern California; a quick Google search indicates that as many as 450,000 persons of Armenian descent also reside therein.) The festival will span four days (April 2-5, 2009), and will occupy about seven acres at the Orange Country Fair Ground in Costa Mesa, California. The entrance fee will be seven dollars and the organizers expect it to draw a minimum of 100,000 people. According to the organizers, the festival would be one of the largest outreach efforts ever in the United States regarding Anatolian Culture.

¶3. As taken from its website, the Pacifica Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2003 by the "Turkish American community of California." The Pacifica Institute's mission is to "promote cross-cultural awareness, in order to attain peace and diversity with our neighbors, help establish a better society where individuals love, respect, and accept each other as they are." Its vision is "a community in which people from all walks of life interact with each other and cooperate to serve their communities, thereby strengthening civil society and promoting the development of human values." The website contains information on the Whirling Dervishes and the poet Rumi, figures strongly identified with Sufi Islam. The organizers readily acknowledged being affiliated with the Gulen Movement.

¶4. Barlas explained that he initiated the meeting to alert the Consulate to the festival (invitations will be extended to the Consul General and Ambassador) and to inform that approximately 120 Turkish artists, support staff and construction workers will be applying for visas. According to Barlas, he has an appointment with Turkish President Gul to

present the festival,s promotional materials (a DVD and brochure, developed by Vural) and to receive Gul's comments on their planned outreach to the Armenian government. Barlas explained that he spoke to Gul during Gul's January visit to Washington. According to Barlas, Gul reacted favorably and supported the idea of the festival. Barlas has also presented festival materials to Armenian associations in the Los Angeles area and hopes to present them to the Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles.

15. Comment. Although the organizers said that this was the largest such event they had ever attempted, they claimed to have substantial experience with similar events. The promotional materials provided were professionally prepared, and the organizers responded satisfactorily to all of the questions we raised about event preparations. End comment.  
WIENER